

**00930**

**1962/10/31**

31 October 1962

## MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Soviet MRBMs in Cuba

1. On August 16th at a meeting in Secretary Rusk's Conference Room attended by Rusk, Johnson, McNamara, Gilpatric, Bundy, Gen. Taylor and a number of others for the purpose of discussing General Lanodela's Phase II activities, McCone reported on the sudden importation of material -- as to the characteristics of which was unidentified -- Soviet personnel, and at that meeting speculated that this could be electronic equipment for use against General and/or military equipment including medium range ballistic missiles.

2. On August 21st at a meeting in Secretary Rusk's office attended by the same group, McCone again reviewed the situation as it developed since August 16th, reported definite information on surface to air missiles and again speculated on the probability of medium range ballistic missiles.

3. On August 22nd McCone gave the same information to the President, adding certain details concerning the number of Soviet and Chinese personnel who had recently entered Cuba, ~~who had just returned from Havana.~~

4. On August 23rd in a meeting with the President, Rusk, McNamara, Gilpatric, General Taylor, Bundy and others, McCone again reviewed the situation and questioned the need for the extensive SAM installations unless they were to make possible the concealment of MRBMs.

5. The same reasoning was applied in discussions with Senator Russell's Subcommittee, Chairman Vinson's Subcommittee and in private talk with Chairman Cannon prior to McCone's departure on August 23rd.

6. On Saturday, August 25th, McCone urged General Carter, Acting DCI, to prepare low level R 101 flights over certain Soviet-Cuban installations in order to obtain detailed technical information.

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Box 2,  
DCI (McDonnell) Thomas for  
The Record  
24 Sept - 31 Dec 1962

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(11-177)

7. On September 7th, McCone wired General Carter as follows:

"Question very much if G-packets will be helpful Cuba and urge frequent repeat missions of recent reconnaissance operations which Gilpatrick advises informative. Also I suggest use of R-101 if necessary. My hunch is we might face prospect of Soviet short-range surface-to-surface missiles of portable type in Cuba which could command important targets of southeast United States and possibly Latin American Caribbean areas. You might suggest to Rush that we develop joint policies for action in Cuba with selected Caribbean, South American states as an alternative to seeking unanimous OAS action which most certainly will be an ineffective compromise solution if past history is any indicator."

8. On September 10th McCone wired Carter [REDACTED] as follows: E

"Difficult for me to rationalize extensive costly defenses being established in Cuba as such extreme costly measures to accomplish security and secrecy not consistent with other policies such as refugees, legal travel, etc. Appears to me quite possible measures now being taken are for purpose of insuring secrecy of some offensive capability such as MRBMs to be installed by Soviets after present phase completed and country secured from overflights. Suggest BNE study motives behind these defensive measures which even seem to exceed those provided most satellites."

9. On September 11th McCone received communication from Carter stating that the BNE continued to feel that the installation of SA 2s is most reasonably explained by other than a desire to hide MRBM build-up. To this McCone responded on September 11th as follows:

"Also I continue to be concerned that the establishment of defensive equipment and installations is merely a prelude to the location of an offensive weapon capability and once this is done the implementation of

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Box 2,  
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our policy as reported in the press might be extremely difficult and involve unacceptable dangers. I would like to talk with you [redacted] E  
from Norstad's headquarters to the White House or Pentagon situation room tonight (13 Sept.) between 1700 and 1800 your time. Unless I hear to the contrary from you by twelve noon today your time I will proceed Paris this evening and make arrangements for this call."

10. On September 14th McGee cabled Carter as follows:

"Also believe we must carefully study the prospect of secret importation and placement of several Soviet MRBMs which could not be detected by us if Cuban defenses deny overflight. In reflecting on my observations of Thor installation in Britain and Jupiters in Italy I can envisage a Soviet plan to package missile, control and operating equipment in such a way that a unit could be made operational a few hours after a site cleared and a modest concrete pad poured. Do not wish to be overly alarming this matter but believe CIA and community must keep government informed of danger of a surprise and also that detection of preparatory steps possibly beyond our capability once Cuban defense system operative. Thrust of press reports reaching me is that there exists a clear demarcation between defensive and offensive preparations and I question if we can be sure of this. I recognize Cuban policy decisions most delicate and beyond Agency or my competence. However believe we must give these making decision our best estimate of possible developments and alternative situations which might evolve and unexpectedly confront us."

11. On 19 September Carter communicated the summary of the conclusions of Cuban ENIE of that date, paragraph D stating that in the opinion of the ENIE, establishment of MRBMs in Cuba would be

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incompatible with Soviet policy -- and indicate a greater willingness to increase risk in US/Soviet relations than the Soviet Union has displayed so far--.

12. On September 20th McGone responded as follows:

"Ref DMR 37422: Suggest most careful consideration to conclusion last sentence paragraph d. As an alternative I can see that an offensive Soviet Cuban base will provide Soviets with most important and effective trading position in connection with all other critical areas and hence they might take an unconnected with in order to establish such a position."

13. It is reported that during McGone's absence, Acting DCI, at a meeting held in Mr. Wendy's office on 10 September, proposed an overflight which would cover the entire north and south perimeter of Cuba east of Havana and out to the eastern tip of Oriente Province except for an area in the immediate vicinity of Santa Clara where four SAM sites were known to exist and had been photographed. The purpose of this flight was to make a final determination as to how many SAM sites existed or were under construction. It is reported that because of Rusk's concern for the safety of the U-2 in view of the Saboteur violation on 7 September and the ChiMat loss on 10 September, the sense of the meeting (particularly that of Secretary Rusk) that CIA be permitted to make 4 flights against Cuba, two peripheral and two overflights of limited penetration, including the Isle of Pines. These flights were executed between 26 September and 7 October. On the 14th of September the meeting of the Special Group, JCS representative outlined capabilities for low level coverage. Secretary of Defense indicated he did not wish this operation considered until the results were obtained from CIA reconnaissance as approved on September 11th.

14. On October 4th McGone noted to the Special Group that there had been no coverage of the center of Cuba and more particularly the entire western end of the island for over a month, and all flights since 3 September had been either peripheral or limited and therefore CIA did not know, nor could advise, whether an offensive capability was being created. DCI objected strenuously to the limitations which had been placed on overflights and there arose a considerable discussion (with some heat) as to whether limitations had or had not been placed on CIA by the Special Group. NRO and Colonel Stakely were requested

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24 Sept - 31 Dec 1962

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to prepare a comprehensive plan for aerial survey of Cuba and to submit the plan at a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 9th.

15. On 9 October Special Group (Augmented) met. Reviewed NRO and JCS proposals and it was agreed that a U-2 flight flying from south to north across the western part of Cuba where at least two SAM sites were known to exist should be undertaken promptly and that a number of similar sorties might be mounted if this flight did not activate ground-air fire. (Higher authority approved this one mission and left consideration of further missions until the results of the approved mission were determined.)

16. This mission was flown on October 14th. It was successful and encountered no resistance. On October 15th at a Special Meeting (and prior to receipt of the results of the October 14th flight), two additional U-2 missions to cover all of Cuba were approved and this was concurred in by higher authority.

JOHN A. McCONE  
Director

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24 Sept - 31 Dec 1962

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502A/6

11 September 1962

## RECENT SOVIET MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN CUBA

- I. New information from highly reliable sources confirms extensive Soviet military deliveries to Cuba in recent weeks.
  - A. These have included surface-to-air (SAM) missiles, guided missile boats, at least one and probably more MIG-21 (FISHBED) jet fighter aircraft, and additional land armaments.
- II. Twelve SAM sites are being set up, and SAM equipment has been tentatively identified at one additional site. One probable missile assembly area has been identified.
  - A. The small amount of permanent construction at these sites and the speed of the work indicate that the program is proceeding on a crash basis.
  - B. Some of these sites could be operational very soon.
  - C. At least 125 technically trained personnel will be required to operate each site, which includes six launchers and radar and electronic gear.
    1. This figure excludes security and support personnel.
    2. We have seen no indication that Cubans have been trained for operation of SAMs. Soviet personnel will doubtless man the sites for at least the 9 to 12 months while Cubans are being trained.

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- III. The Soviet SAM system is estimated to have a slant range of about 25 nautical miles.
- A. The high altitude capability of the system would be in the region of 60,000 to 80,000 feet--or, if the newest version has been supplied to Cuba--in the region of 80,000 to 100,000 feet.
  - B. Low altitude capability is estimated as low as 2,500 feet, but maximum effectiveness of the system would probably be between 10,000 and 60,000 feet.
- IV. Additional SAM sites probably are being or soon will be set up in Cuba.
- A. The pattern now emerging suggests that as many as 24 sites--enough to provide modern anti-aircraft defense for the entire island--may eventually be set up.
    1. The 12 sites already confirmed could cover almost the entire western half of Cuba.
- V. At least eight Komar-class missile boats have been delivered to Cuba in recent weeks.
- A. These PT-like boats have a maximum speed of 43 knots and a radius of about 325 nautical miles at 20 knots.
    1. They carry two missile launchers each; the missiles are primarily designed to attack surface vessels but can be used for shore bombardment. The useful range of the missiles is 15 to 17 miles. They carry 2,000 pound high-explosive warheads.

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2. Some Cuban naval personnel have received training in the USSR, but it is not known whether they received Komar training.
- B. These boats are in addition to 13 or more motor torpedo boats and six Kronshtadt-class subchasers delivered by the USSR to Cuba earlier this year.
- VI. Highly reliable sources also report the presence of one Soviet-made MIG-21 (FISHBED) jet fighter aircraft at a Cuban airfield. We have indications that there may be at least 13 more still unassembled at this airfield.
  - A. This is the first confirmation of a MIG-21 in Cuba.
    1. The MIG-21 has a speed in excess of 1,000 miles per hour and is normally armed with two air-to-air missiles as well as rockets and cannon.
    2. Prior to the recent arrivals, Cuba is believed to have had about 60 MIG fighters, including MIG-15's, MIG-17's, and at least a dozen super-sonic MIG-19's (FARMERS).
  - B. No Soviet-made bombers have been noted.
- VII. Soviet military deliveries show no sign of letting up.
  - A. More than 15 Soviet dry-cargo ships are now en route to Cuba, of which at least ten are probably carrying military cargoes.

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24 Sept - 31 Dec 1962

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1. The total number of military or military-related shipments to Cuba since the current deliveries began in mid-July may be as high as 65.
2. Routine Soviet shipments of economic aid and trade goods to Cuba are now largely coming on chartered Western vessels.

VIII. At least 1,700 Soviet military personnel arrived in Cuba in late July and early August.

A. Most of them appear to be involved in setting up the SAM facilities, but thus far we cannot conclude that this is their only purpose in Cuba.

B. Over 1,000 more personnel have arrived in Soviet vessels since late August; there have been no reports on their activities.

1. Still more may have arrived on Soviet cargo ships.

C. Prior to the beginning of the influx in late July, there were an estimated 500 military technicians and several thousand economic specialists from the Soviet bloc in Cuba.

IX. Using the prices quoted in Soviet-Indonesian arms contracts, we estimate that the SAM sites already confirmed and for the Komar boats probably will cost Cuba more than \$50 million.

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- A. Current shipments may ultimately total well over \$100 million and bring total Soviet military aid to Cuba to more than \$300 million.
- B. Although little financial information is available on the Cuban-Soviet military arrangements, it appears likely that the terms probably include substantial discounts from the quoted prices and a credit to be repaid in Cuban goods over a period of about ten years.
- X. Moscow's pronouncement yesterday that a US attack on Cuba could lead to global war is the strongest display of verbal support for Castro since Khrushchev's letter to President Kennedy in April 1961 which warned that the USSR would do whatever was necessary to repulse such an attack.

- A. The tone of the Soviet statement (which is tough) and its thrust (which is to disclaim that Moscow is doing anything more than the US is doing in areas sensitive to the bloc) suggests the Russians are anxious to deter the US from taking any drastic action against Cuba.
- B. There is no sure way of telling whether the Soviets are bluffing. But to note they have left themselves some convenient loopholes in the implied pledge to defend Castro.

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1. Thus, while they talk of taking "all measures to ensure that our armed forces are brought to the highest state of military preparedness," they have been careful to add the caveat that "however, there are exclusively precautionary measures."

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24 Sept - 31 Dec 1962

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**EXCISED EXTRACT FOLLOWS**

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#107

31 October 1962

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"Ref DIR 37228: Suggest most careful consideration to conclusion last sentence paragraph d. As an alternative I can see that an offensive Soviet Cuban base will provide Soviets with most important and effective trading position in connection with all other critical areas and hence they might take an unexpected risk in order to establish such a position."

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16. This mission was flown on October 14th. It was successful and encountered no resistance. On October 15th at a Special Meeting (and prior to receipt of the results of the October 14th flight), two additional U-2 missions to cover all of Cuba were approved and this was concurred in by higher authority.

JOHN A. McCONE  
Director

- 5 -

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